

Official 2011 Travel Guide

# NEBRASKA

[VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov)





# KEARNEY

## NEBRASKA



## *Stop. Play. Stay.®*

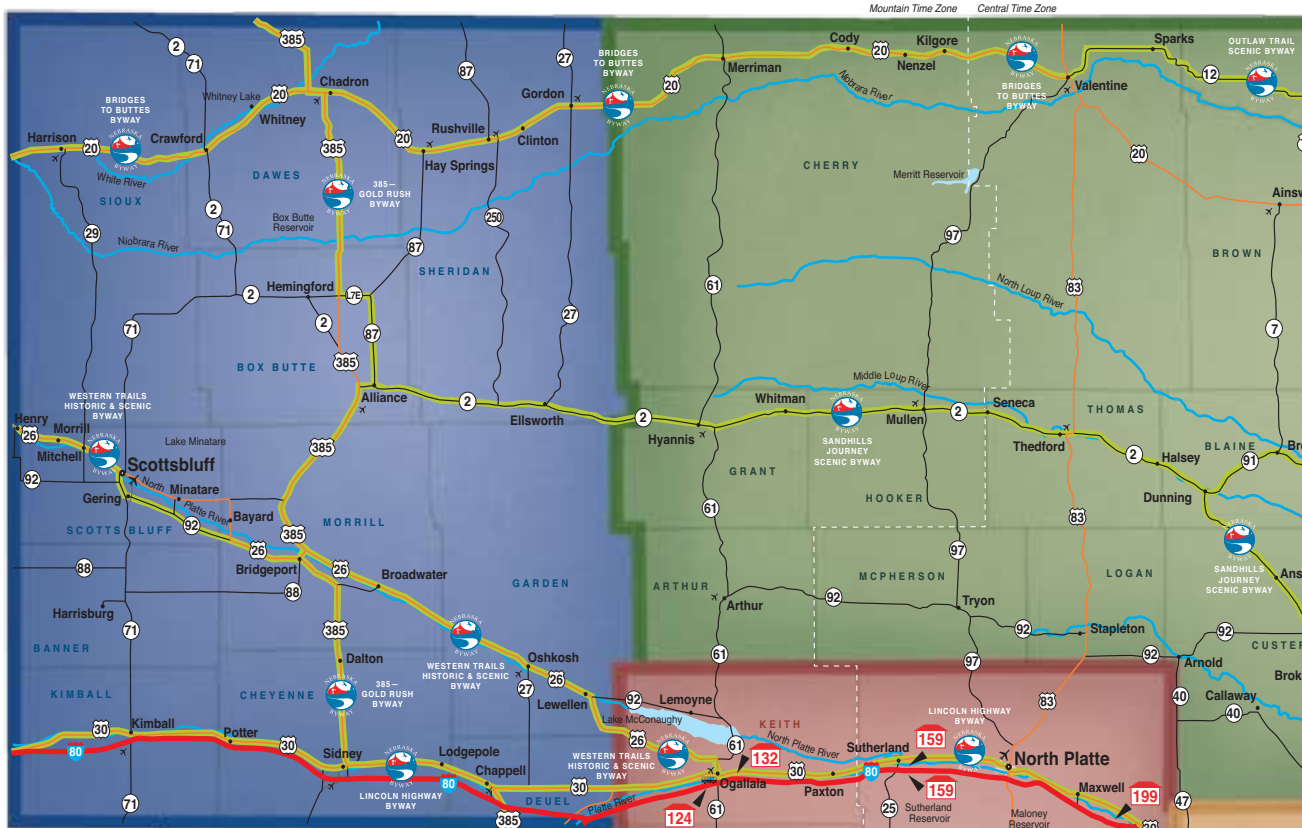
Situated in the south-central part of Nebraska, Kearney is the perfect place to stop, play, stay on your way from Interstate 80 or Highway 30.

The Great Platte River Road Archway is an exciting stop to experience the adventures of the Oregon and Mormon Trails as well as the Lincoln Highway and beyond with 12 unique walk-through, immersive environments. Also check out the NEW Earth Lodge, the largest in the United States constructed with all-natural materials in a traditional method.

Kearney also offers outstanding entertainment, recreational, historical and cultural attractions along with over 60 restaurants and more than 200 shopping opportunities.



For your complimentary visitor's guide visit  
@ [www.visitkearney.org](http://www.visitkearney.org) or CALL 800-652-9435



## [ REGIONAL MAP ]



### MAP KEY

- State Road
- U.S. Road
- Interstate Highway
- Nebraska Byway
- State Numbered Route
- U.S. Numbered Route
- Interstate Numbered Route
- Mile Marker for I-80 Visitor Center
- Airport
- Bus Terminal or Stop
- Major River
- County Boundary
- Panhandle Region
- Prairie Lakes Region
- Sandhills Region
- Frontier Trails Region
- Pioneer Country Region
- Metro Region
- Lewis and Clark Region

### 385 – Gold Rush Byway

U.S. Hwy 385  
866-545-4030  
[VisitNebraska.gov/goldrush](http://VisitNebraska.gov/goldrush)

### Bridges to Buttes Byway

U.S. Hwy 20  
402-376-2969  
[VisitNebraska.gov/bridges](http://VisitNebraska.gov/bridges)

### Heritage Highway

U.S. Hwy 136  
888-404-1315  
[HeritageHighway136.com](http://HeritageHighway136.com)

### Lewis & Clark Scenic Byway

U.S. Hwy 75  
402-685-5175  
[LewisAndClarkScenicByway.com](http://LewisAndClarkScenicByway.com)

### Lincoln Highway

Scenic & Historic Byway  
U.S. Hwy 30  
800-652-9435  
[LincolnHighwayNebraskaByway.com](http://LincolnHighwayNebraskaByway.com)

### Loup Rivers Scenic Byway

NE Hwy 11 and NE Hwy 91  
308-728-3393  
[LoupRiversScenicByway.com](http://LoupRiversScenicByway.com)

### Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway

NE Hwy 12  
402-582-4866  
[NebraskaOutlawTrail.org](http://NebraskaOutlawTrail.org)

### Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

NE Hwy 2  
308-546-0636  
[SandhillsJourney.com](http://SandhillsJourney.com)

### Western Trails

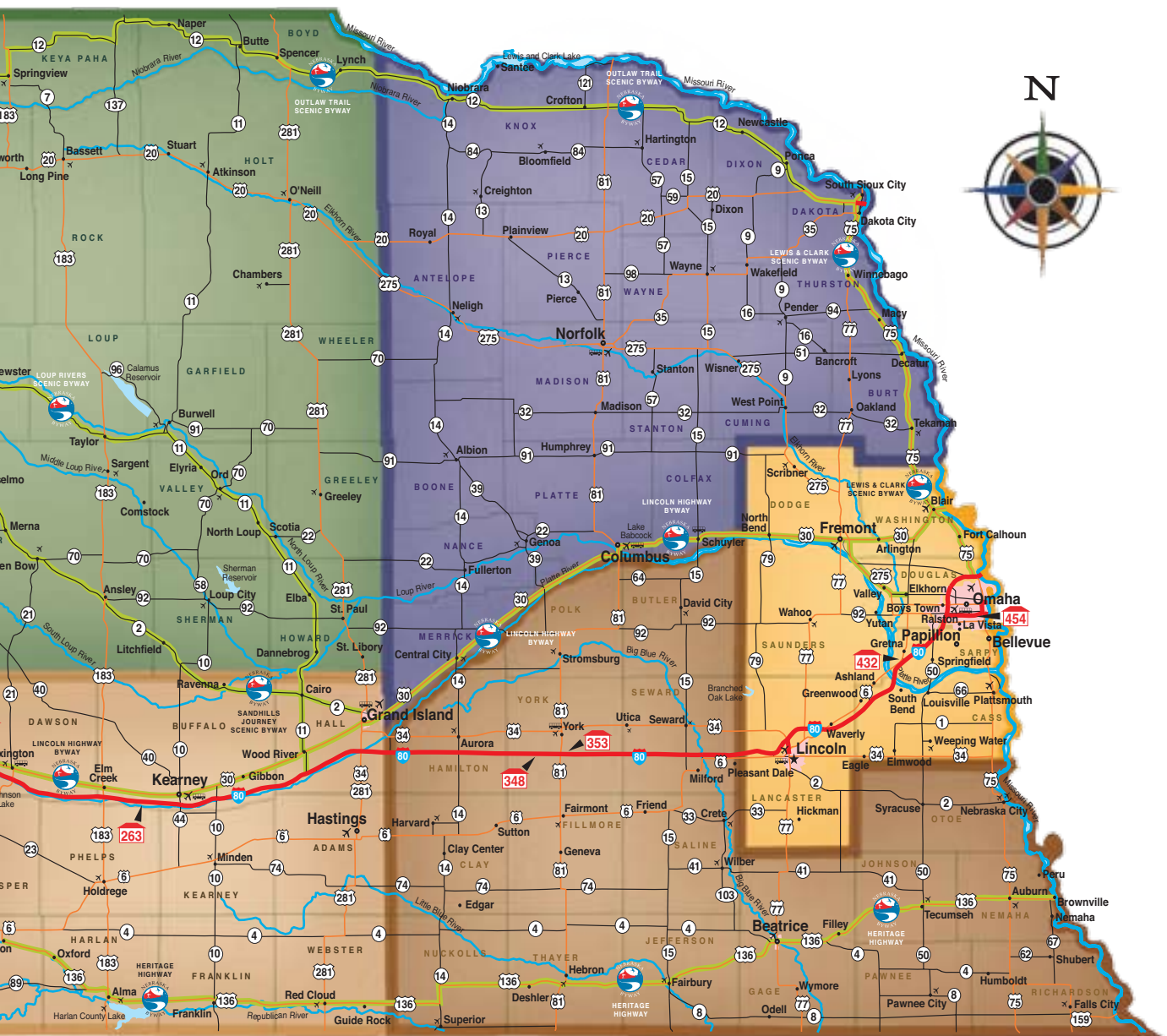
### Scenic & Historic Byway

U.S. Hwy 26 and NE Hwy 92  
800-658-4390  
[VisitNebraska.gov/westerntrails](http://VisitNebraska.gov/westerntrails)



To view Nebraska's Byways  
photos, videos, and more, log on to  
**[VisitNebraska.gov/byways](http://VisitNebraska.gov/byways)**





## [ INTERSTATE 80 VISITOR CENTERS ]

Looking for information about Nebraska?

The state-staffed visitor centers along I-80 are a great place to start. We've listed the centers

here and marked them on the map so they're

easy to find. Each center offers a variety of

brochures and maps and is regularly staffed.

Most are open Memorial Day–Labor Day,

8 am–5 pm.

### Nebraska-Omaha Travel Information Center

Mile Marker 454

402-595-3990

### Melia Hill Westbound

Mile Marker 432

402-332-2658

### York Westbound

Mile Marker 353

402-362-1548

### York Eastbound

Mile Marker 348

402-362-1549

### Kearney Eastbound

Mile Marker 263

308-865-5427

### Cozad Westbound

Mile Marker 231

308-784-5514

### Cozad Eastbound

Mile Marker 222

308-784-5516

### Brady Westbound

Mile Marker 199

308-582-4720

### Sutherland Westbound

Mile Marker 159

308-386-2534

### Sutherland Eastbound

Mile Marker 159

308-386-4425

### Ogallala Westbound

Mile Marker 132

308-284-8074

### Ogallala Eastbound

Mile Marker 124

308-284-8073



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## [ ABOUT THE COVER ]

More than 700 acres of wilderness are waiting to be explored at Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area south of Gering. Photo by Rick Neibel.

## [ CONTACT INFO ]

Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
Travel and Tourism Division  
P.O. Box 98907 • Lincoln, NE 68509-8907  
888-444-1867  
tourism@VisitNebraska.org  
VisitNebraska.gov

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission  
P.O. Box 30370 • Lincoln, NE 68503-0370  
800-826-PARK or 402-471-0641  
OutdoorNebraska.org

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The *Nebraska Travel Guide* is produced by Snitily Carr  
for the Travel and Tourism Division.

For advertising, call Snitily Carr at 402-489-2121.

## GET UP AND ON YOUR WAY

Relive special memories of road trips past with a visit to Nebraska.

With all there is to see and do, you'll find it easy to re-create your favorite adventures while reconnecting with family and friends.

So what are you waiting for? Load up the car, pack some snacks, and embark on the kind of vacation you enjoyed when you were younger—a getaway filled with interesting stops, fun-filled days, and unforgettable moments.





# LOOKING FOR MORE ABOUT NEBRASKA?

Get travel advice, interact with others, and find up-to-the-minute information about what to do on your next trip to Nebraska.



Strategic Air & Space Museum, Omaha

## MOBILE

Access Nebraska Tourism's mobile website on your smartphone for events, attractions, recreation, and videos when you're on the go.

## CODE OF THE ROAD

New to the 2011 *Nebraska Travel Guide* is the addition of QR (quick response) codes, two-dimensional images that can be read using a mobile device equipped with a reader application.



When you scan the codes in this year's travel guide, you'll quickly be redirected to an informative podcast. Find more QR codes in the scenic byways and golf sections!

## PODCASTS

Download and watch videos at [VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov), YouTube, and iTunes.

## E-NEWSLETTER

Sign up for *Destination Nebraska* at [VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov).

## TWITTER

Follow us @NebraskaTourism.

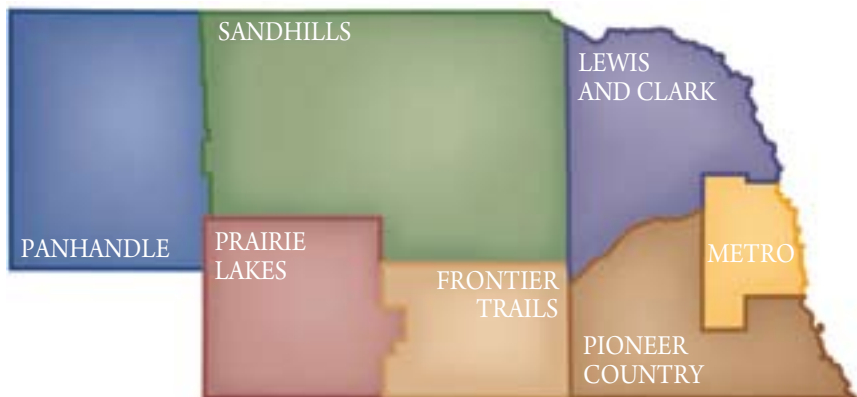
## FACEBOOK

Become a fan, post pictures, and share your Nebraska vacation experiences at [Facebook.com/VisitNebraska](https://www.facebook.com/VisitNebraska).






# REDISCOVER THE ROAD TRIP IN NEBRASKA



The *Nebraska Travel Guide* is the definitive source for planning your next getaway. The guide provides detailed information specific to each of Nebraska's seven regions. For accommodation information, refer to the "travel keys" located at the bottom of each two-page spread.

 — Hotels & Motels

 — Unique Accommodations (*Bed & Breakfasts and Guest Ranches*)

 — Campgrounds

## PARTNERS AND WINNERS

You'll notice some shaded entries throughout the guide—these are our advertising partners. And look for the "Award Winner" symbol, which means that the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism honored the attraction for outstanding contributions in the past year.



## EXPAND YOUR SEARCH

There's a whole lot more in store at VisitNebraska.gov. You'll find a travel planner, itineraries, downloadable brochures, videos, photo galleries, vacation packages, kids' activities, and other great tools to help you plan your Nebraska getaway.

**NEBRASKA**  
possibilities...endless<sup>SM</sup>

*While considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the listings throughout this publication, the Nebraska Travel Guide and the Travel and Tourism Division do not accept responsibility for the accuracy of information including telephone numbers listed in this publication.*



Printed on paper manufactured with virgin pulp from certified sources and a minimum of 10% post-consumer recovered fiber.

## [ TRAVEL INFO ]

### Safety Regulations

- **Seat belts** – Children up to age 6 are required to ride in an approved car seat or booster seat. Seat belts are required for adults in the front seat and for children 6–18.
- **Helmets** – Motorcycle operators and passengers are required to wear a helmet.
- **Texting** – Texting while driving is prohibited. Breaking the law is a secondary offense.

### Time Zones

The western third of the state operates on Mountain Time, while the central and eastern portions of Nebraska are on Central Time.

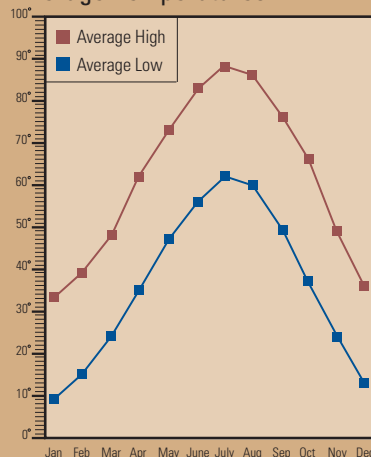
### Breathe Easy

Nebraska is a smoke-free state; smoking is banned in all public workplaces, including bars and restaurants.

### Transportation

- **Interstate travel** – I-80 stretches more than 450 miles across the state from east to west.
- **Air travel** – Commercial air travel is available at two larger airports in Lincoln and Omaha as well as at several regional airports across the state.
- **Bus travel** – Greyhound bus stops can be found in 14 different communities throughout the state.
- **Train travel** – Amtrak stops in McCook, Holdrege, Hastings, Lincoln, and Omaha.

### Average Temperatures



For current weather and road conditions, call 511 from any wireless or landline phone in Nebraska. Dial 800-906-9069 from outside the state.

# Family Time

They say the family that plays together, stays together. Well, there's no better place to test that theory than in Nebraska. From border to border, you'll find plenty to please even the pickiest of family members. So get out and enjoy some quality time together. You'll have a ball and create memories you'll cherish for a lifetime.

## ANIMAL HOUSE

Nothing says family fun like a day at the zoo. After all, who wouldn't enjoy getting in touch with their wild side?

Get swept off your feet—literally—at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, where you can get a bird's-eye view of the animals from the Skyfari overhead tram. Home to the world's largest indoor desert and nocturnal exhibits, this renowned zoo also features a 71,000-square-foot aquarium, an IMAX theatre, state-of-the-art gorilla and orangutan habitats, and the new Expedition Madagascar exhibit.

Everyone's invited to learn firsthand at the Lincoln Children's Zoo. Named one of the top 25 zoos by *Parents* magazine, it's a place where children can interact with animals and nature. Highlights include a butterfly pavilion, petting zoo, camel dock, and critter encounter. For a well-rounded experience, hop aboard the Z, O & O train to see the zoo from a new perspective.

Courtesy of Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

R. Mitchell

Lincoln Children's Zoo, Lincoln



Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park  
and Wildlife Safari, Ashland



Courtesy of Omaha's Henry David Zoo

## RAMP UP FOR FUN

Tired of life in the fast lane? Pull off and enjoy a more relaxed pace at I-80 Exit 426 near Ashland. Just a short drive from Omaha and Lincoln, this destination has something for everyone.

Begin your expedition at Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari. This 440-acre, drive-through park provides an up-close look at North American wildlife—elk, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, bison, and a variety of waterfowl—in their natural habitat.

Your spirits will be flying high after a visit to the Strategic Air & Space Museum, where you can walk among retired military aircraft, discover the marvels of space exploration, and even take to the skies in the flight simulator. Kids will enjoy the International Play Station and Dreamers Gallery, where fun and learning go hand in hand.

Finish up with a stay at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park's cabins, lodge, or campsites. Situated along the banks of the Platte River, this popular park is filled with fun recreational activities the entire family will enjoy.

## BONE-A FIDE GOOD TIMES

Whether you have a budding paleontologist on your hands or simply someone who enjoys the thrill of discovery, you're in for a treat. Nebraska is a veritable gold mine of ancient finds.

Without a doubt, one of the best places to see archaeology in action is Ashfall Fossil Beds near Royal. It's the only known site in the world where three-dimensional skeletons of prehistoric animals are preserved. And you can watch as scientists uncover the fossilized remains of these animals,

which died nearly 12 million years ago after a massive volcanic eruption.

Meet the big man on campus at the University of Nebraska State Museum of Natural History in Lincoln. Measuring in at 14 feet, the world's largest exhibited elephant skeleton dates back to the late Pleistocene era. Other unique specimens, including a life-size allosaurus, are sure to create a larger-than-life experience for you and your family.

## PACK YOUR SUIT

Need to cool off a bit? You're in luck, because Nebraska is overflowing with water parks where the whole family can relax and enjoy some fun in the sun.

Find double the amusement in Columbus, where a duo of water parks is sure to float your boat. Pawnee Plunge Water Park provides seven acres of water recreation ranging from mild to wild. Take a relaxing journey down the lazy river, get your splash on at the interactive aquadeck, or be swept away by one of the four thrilling slides. Too chilly outside? Head indoors where the water's always warm at Discovery Island Water Playground.

If you just can't get enough time in the pool, more water-drenched delight awaits in Hastings, Omaha, Lincoln, Beatrice, Grand Island, Ashland, and Lexington.

# Don't forget the POPCORN

Get the kids in their pajamas, grab your sweetheart, and pile into the family wagon for an old-fashioned night at the movies. Only a few hundred drive-in theatres remain in the United States, and Nebraska is home to two: Neligh's Starlite Drive-In and The Sandhills Drive-In in Alliance. It's nostalgic family fun at its best, and all it's missing is you.



Starlite Drive-In, Neligh



Water parks, pgs. 74–75

Children's museums, pgs. 88, 100

Fossils, pg. 40

Pawnee Plunge Water Park, Columbus





# Hunting & Grounds & Fishing Holes

Turkeys to trout, ducks to deer, and pheasants to paddlefish—the abundant populations of wildlife and wide-open spaces in Nebraska will have you planning several trips in the state each year.

## THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

Hunters and anglers will discover a number of top-notch opportunities coupled with a wide variety of seasons. No matter what time of the year, sport can be found in our fields and waters. And finding those fields and waters is now easier, thanks to a statewide initiative that opens up private land for public walk-in

hunting and fishing. Watch for special signage designating land as part of the Open Fields and Waters Program, or visit [OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org) for interactive maps.

## FILL YOUR TAG

Whether you enjoy hunting a variety of game or are dedicated to the pursuit of specific quarry, you can find what you're looking for in the open fields and dense woodlands scattered throughout the state. Seasons are generally long, and permits are easy and convenient to obtain.

There are excellent populations of white-tailed and mule deer along with several permit options that include a limited statewide buck tag, season choice permits (allowing hunting in multiple seasons until the tag is filled), and bonus tags for antlerless animals on most permits. Last year, a new October firearm season was introduced in addition to the 10-day November firearm season, and lengthy seasons exist for archery and muzzleloader hunting. Deer seasons overlap with the fall turkey season, allowing the chance to scout for one species while hunting another.



*Archery Turkey Hunting*





White-Tailed Deer

NEBRASKA Game and Parks Magazine NSGPC

## GET HOOKED ON FISHING NEBRASKA

Variety is the name of the game for anglers in Nebraska. Have your tackle box equipped to reel in walleye, bass, panfish, catfish, trout, and more. And with more than 450 public waterways throughout the state, a fishing hole is always nearby.

Perhaps the best place to start is in west-central Nebraska at Lake McConaughy, where serious fishermen go for walleye, white bass, and wipers (a large hybrid striped bass species). The cooler waters of adjacent Lake Ogallala offer excellent trout fishing. The state's southwestern and south-central reservoirs—Enders, Red Willow, Medicine Creek, and Harlan County—are popular destinations for white bass, wipers, and other species. Anglers visiting northern parts of the state will find that smallmouth bass, sauger, and walleye are the attractions at Lewis and Clark Lake on the upper Missouri River. Reservoirs such as Calamus and Merritt, as well as the many smaller Sandhills lakes, offer good-size walleye, bluegill and other panfish, catfish, northern pike, and perch. And if fly fishing is more your style, search for brown and brook trout in secluded streams such as Soldier and Verdigre Creeks.

Even if you're just passing through the state, you can spend a few blissful hours casting and reeling in the many small lakes located along Interstate 80. Look for the highest concentration of these fishing holes in the central portion of the state between Grand Island and North Platte.

Youth 16 and under do not need a permit to fish in Nebraska, making a short fishing excursion a great way to add a little something extra to a family trip. A number of convenience stores and bait shops sell Nebraska's 1- and 3-day permits and other equipment.

*Plan your fishing trip at [OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org), where you'll find directions to the state's public waters along with stocking reports and information about available species. You can even buy your permit online.*

## \$5 Permits for Youth

A statewide commitment to expanded opportunities for young hunters makes family hunting trips—and first hunts—easy and affordable. In 2010, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission introduced \$5 deer and turkey permits for resident and nonresident youth 15 and younger in an effort to encourage hunters to pass on the sport of hunting to the next generation. Youth deer tags are good throughout the state during any open deer season and include a bonus tag. Aspiring turkey hunters can have multiple tags, and there is no minimum age for the hunter. A \$5 youth tag is also available for archery antelope hunting.

Along with the \$5 big game tags, special youth seasons are designated for upland game (pheasant, quail, and partridge) as well as waterfowl. Dates for the youth seasons vary, but they generally occur the weekend prior to the main season opening.



NEBRASKA Game and Parks Magazine NSGPC



Pheasant hunting, pg. 52

State parks, pgs. 38–39, 64, 118–119

Lake McConaughy, Ogallala



NEBRASKA Game and Parks Magazine NSGPC

*Content for the Great Outdoors section was provided by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Visit [OutdoorNebraska.org](http://OutdoorNebraska.org) for more information about hunting, fishing, conservation, and the state park system.*







# History *in the* making

Nebraska is rich with history, and there's no doubt that Nebraskans are proud of this fact. From the traditions of the earliest inhabitants to the tales of western expansion, there's plenty to see and learn at stops all across this great state. So come and share in our history—and maybe take home a few stories of your own.

## TRAILBLAZING

Lewis and Clark's exploratory journey through the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 led the way to western expansion that brought thousands of pioneers to these lands in search of a better way of life. The Oregon, Mormon, and California Trails all crossed through Nebraska. Evidence of their existence can be seen in the historic way stations and wagon ruts that still remain today.

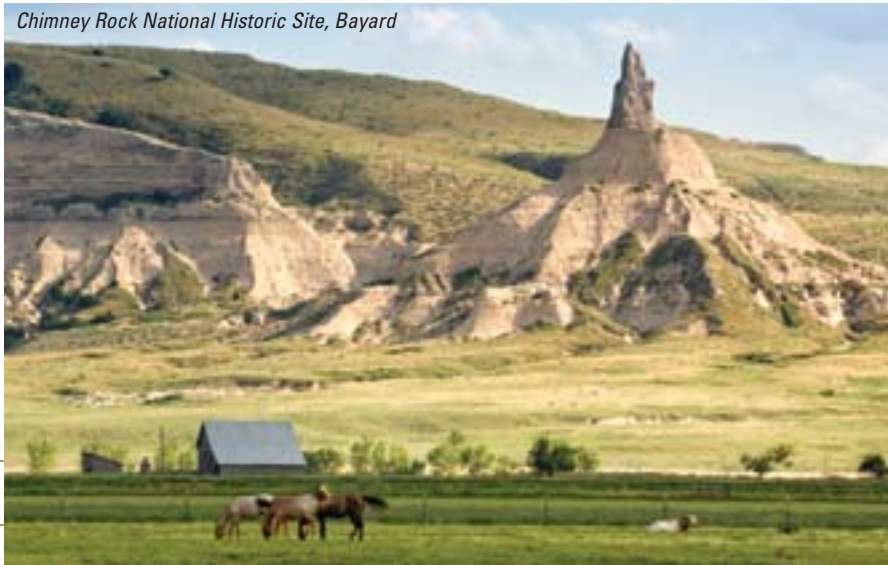
One of the most recognizable landmarks is Chimney Rock near Bayard. Jutting into the Nebraska skyline, it was a welcome sight for weary pioneers making their way across the prairie.

Offering food and supplies, Rock Creek Station near Fairbury was a widely used rest stop for those traveling the Oregon and California Trails. Also serving as a Pony Express station, it gained notoriety after Wild Bill Hickok began his gunfighting career by shooting David McCanles.

Other common pioneer stops that can still be visited today are Robidoux Pass and Scotts Bluff National Monument near Gering and Ash Hollow near Lewellen.

Not all pioneers continued their journeys westward. With the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862, many decided to settle in Nebraska. Learn how the act forever changed the American frontier at the award-winning Homestead National Monument of America near Beatrice.

Chimney Rock National Historic Site, Bayard



## THE TRUE LOCALS

Before European settlers began to inhabit the western frontier, Nebraska was home to several American Indian nations including the Omaha, Otoe-Missouria, Arapaho, Cheyenne, Pawnee, Lakota, and Ponca, to name a few. Today, their proud heritage can be seen at vibrant events, historic places, and cultural centers across the state.





Witness firsthand the rich traditions of American Indian tribes at one of several powwows held throughout the year. Check out the annual Intertribal Gathering at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska's annual powwow in Niobrara, or the annual Fort Omaha Intertribal Powwow in Omaha.

At Dancing Leaf near Wellfleet, you can catch a glimpse of what primitive American Indian life was like. Find a re-created earth lodge and medicine wheel along with other archaeological information and artifacts at this 115-acre site along the scenic Medicine Creek.

Or if you're interested in taking home a memento of your trip, stop by Woodland Trails in Winnebago for authentic, handmade American Indian arts and crafts.

## HOLD THE FORT

Established to protect settlers and railroad workers, military forts played an integral role in frontier society. You can learn more about these important outposts at historical sites across Nebraska.

## Pony UP!

It ran for only 19 months—from April 1860 to November 1861—but the Pony Express made an indelible mark on our nation's history. And with 53 stations, Nebraska had more miles of trail than any other state or territory.

You, too, can share in the history at the National Pony Express Association's Annual Re-Ride each June when riders reenact the 10-day, 1,900-mile trek from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. Visit [xphomestation.com](http://xphomestation.com) to learn more.



*Fort Robinson Museum, Crawford*

Walk on the parade grounds, visit the blacksmith shop, and spend some time in the stockade at Fort Kearny State Historical Park. Or see what a typical Plains infantry outpost was like near Burwell at Fort Hartsuff State Historical Park.

For the perfect mix of history and recreation, visit Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford.

Operational from 1873 to 1948, the fort served numerous purposes, such as the Red Cloud Indian Agency, a cavalry remount station, a K-9 training center, and a POW camp. These days, you'll find a wide variety of fun things to do at this top destination.

Other important sites include Fort Atkinson State Historical Park (the state's first military post) near the town of Fort Calhoun as well as Fort Sidney Museum and Post Commander's Home in Sidney.



*Fort Hartsuff State Historical Park, Burwell*



American Indians, pg. 121

Forts, pgs. 38–39, 100

History-focused attractions, pgs. 41, 52, 53, 76, 89, 98–99





Memorial Stadium, Lincoln

# A part of the action

If it's recreation you crave, Nebraska will not disappoint. And it doesn't matter the season. Whether you enjoy sitting in the stands or getting right in the thick of things, you'll find more than enough to fill your days with fun and adventure.

## GAME ON!

Around here, Division I athletics are taken pretty seriously. If there's any doubt, just have a look at Memorial Stadium in Lincoln. A really good look. Guided tours of the home of the Huskers are available by appointment, or you can explore the grounds (including the West Stadium Hall of Champions, the Heisman Room, and limited access to the field) on a self-guided tour. To top off the experience, make sure you snag tickets to be part of the sea of red on game day. Whether it's football, volleyball, basketball, or baseball, you're in for some real excitement.

If blue's more your color, join the fans that pack the stands of Qwest Center Omaha to watch the Creighton Bluejays hit the hardwood. It's some of the most exciting basketball action you can find.

The collegiate competition in Omaha continues when the city plays host to the NCAA Men's College World Series. The top eight baseball teams head there each summer to slug it out. This year marks the first for the tournament's new home at TD Ameritrade Park Omaha, a brand-new stadium with seating for 24,000 fans and a 360-degree, walk-around concourse.



Courtesy of Omaha Chamber of Commerce

Creighton Basketball,  
Qwest Center Omaha





*Broken Arrow Wilderness, Fullerton*

## WHERE THE SIDEWALK ENDS

Miles and miles of renowned bike trails. Hiking paths that wind through scenic splendor. Breathtaking views in every direction. Nebraska is brimming with dirt, gravel, and hard surface trails that guide you through some of the most beautiful parts of the state. So load up the bikes, lace up your hiking boots, and get a move on.

One of the state's premier destinations for trail seekers is Chadron State Park, tucked into the northwest corner of the state. Mountain bikers come from far and wide to ride what is considered one of the top single- and dual-track destinations in the nation. And hikers are rewarded with an exhilarating experience—both physically and visually. Other great stops include Ponca State Park, Potter's Pasture near Brady, and the Steamboat Trace Trail that runs between Brownville and Nebraska City.

If you're looking for a way to tool around the state on two wheels, check out BRAN (Bicycle Ride Across Nebraska) and Tour de Nebraska. These annual biking adventures provide a unique way to see the state.

## FLOAT YOUR BOAT

Nebraska may be land-locked, but it has no shortage of opportunities for fun on the water. You can fly across the Platte River on a guided air boat tour, tackle some of the best canoeing spots around, and even head downriver in a livestock tank. (That last one's called tanking, and it's most fun with a group of friends.) Outfitters all across the state are standing by to equip you with everything you need for adventures like these.

In addition, a number of sizeable lakes draw you in with fishing, jetskiing, boating, windsurfing, and even kiteboarding. So there's absolutely no reason to stay dry on your next vacation.

R. Nehal



*Courtesy of the Tri-City Storm*

## Take to the ICE

If you're looking for a frigid face-off, head to Qwest Center Omaha, where the UNO Mavericks take on other big-time hockey teams. Fans can also watch Kearney's Tri-City Storm, the Omaha Lancers, and the Lincoln Stars passing the puck from October through April. And in all instances, a Zamboni sighting is guaranteed.



Lakes and rivers,  
pgs. 53, 64, 65, 101, 120

Hiking and biking trails,  
pgs. 41, 86–87, 121



R. Nehal

*Chadron State Park, Chadron*

*BRAN (Bicycle Ride Across Nebraska)*



Nebraska DFD

# Golf-infused getaways

Lush fairways and expansive vistas have long made Nebraska ideal for golfers. With hundreds of courses to play, it's almost impossible to decide where to start. If you're looking for a unique experience, here are a few you'll want to try.

## UNCOMMON GREENS

Contrary to popular belief, Nebraska is not merely unending prairies. In the Panhandle, for instance, you'll find staggering rock formations that crop up unexpectedly—adding endless interest to both the landscape and your game. Enjoy the view (and 18 holes) at Monument Shadows in Gering at the foot of the towering Scotts Bluff National Monument.

Nebraska's diverse landscape is a big draw for big-name designers such as Arnold Palmer, Pete Dye, Bill Coore, Jack Nicklaus, and Ben Crenshaw. The Beatrice Country Club, for example, was designed by Tom Bendelow, the "Johnny Appleseed of American Golf."

The list also features Tom Lehman, Chris Bands, and Graham Marsh, all of whom recently designed courses at The Prairie Club near Valentine. Open since May 2010, the club has been described as five square miles of golfing glory.

## LEGENDARY LAYOUTS

Ask anyone about golfing in Nebraska and you're bound to hear about the Play the West package featuring five of the state's best courses. It's easy to get started because the details are all handled for you. So round up your foursome and head to any of the following courses.

With native grasses and strategically placed bunkers devouring errant shots, Wild Horse Golf Club near Gothenburg requires the best golfers to pull out all the stops to break even. From the very first hole you'll see why it's one of the most acclaimed courses in Nebraska.

A heralded links course on the south shore of Lake McConaughy, Bayside Golf Club can be described as classic beauty and beast. The views will take your breath away while the design tests your skills. Likewise, Heritage Hills west of McCook boasts endless views and a long history of beguiling even the craftiest duffers.



In Cambridge, the meandering course at Cross Creek Golf Links is a treat for golfers of all ability levels. Its wide fairways and large greens offset the daunting length—7,205 yards from the tips—and keep this wide-open course driver-friendly.

Meadowlark Hills in Kearney is also amiable to golfers. The course's rolling fairways are a sight to behold as they glide along the bluffs of the Platte River Valley.





R. Nebel



*The Prairie Club, Valentine*

## EPIC VIEWS

If your version of the perfect golf getaway includes hitting as many courses as possible in a short amount of time, you'll want to make your way to the eastern end of the state near Lincoln and Omaha. As you might imagine, there are dozens of courses to choose from, including the charmers listed below.

Wilderness Ridge Golf Club in Lincoln creates the perfect setting for a picturesque golfing experience with stunning vistas featuring 22 lakes, four waterfalls, and numerous streams.

Speaking of natural beauty, you can encounter another of the state's most scenic—and in this case, challenging—courses a few minutes east of Lincoln near the town of Eagle. Given a five-star rating in *Golf Digest*, Woodland Hills addresses every golfer's dreams... and nightmares.

Quarry Oaks, another of *Golf Digest*'s top-ranked courses, can be found nestled amongst the natural beauty of the Platte River Valley near Ashland. More than once, the course has been recognized by the magazine as one of America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses.

Nearby in Omaha, Tiburon can pack a vicious bite if you're not careful. A variety of doglegs and well-placed bunkers challenge your game and leave you wanting more.

If wanting more includes watching some of the country's golfing greats, be sure to return for the 2013 U.S. Senior Open at the Omaha Country Club.

## TEE IT OFF

With nearly 200 courses available for public play, you're never too far from the perfect round. For a complete list of Nebraska's public and semiprivate courses, go to [VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov). You'll also find a variety of travel packages created specifically for golfers.



*Wilderness Ridge  
Golf Club, Lincoln*

# Natural Nebraska

As you make your way across the state, you can't help but notice the ecological wonders in every direction. No towering skyscrapers or stressful traffic jams. Only beautiful and peaceful surroundings that reconnect you with nature.



*Pelican at Medicine Creek State Recreation Area, Cambridge*



*Prairie Dog at Fort Niobrara  
National Wildlife  
Refuge, Valentine*

E. BOWSER

## BIRD IS THE WORD

One of the more popular ecological pastimes in Nebraska is bird-watching, and for good reason. From the painted bunting in spring to the Carolina wren in winter, more than 300 species of enchanting birds visit central and western Nebraska throughout the year. The Chicken Dance Trail has mapped out five birding adventures that are sure to excite the avid enthusiast and the casual observer alike. These adventures provide step-by-step guidance to reach the state's best birding hot spots, greatly increasing the chances of spotting your favorite feathered friends.

When it's a sure bet you're looking for, you can find it from late February through early April along the braided waters of the Platte River. That's where nearly half a million sandhill cranes stop to rest and refuel before continuing their journey north. The best time to view the cranes is at sunrise and sunset, and you can reserve your spot in a viewing blind at a handful of locales between Grand Island and Kearney.



## SEEK REFUGE

Ready to become one with your environment? A number of wildlife refuges allow you to do just that. These designated areas help with the conservation of Nebraska's indigenous flora and fauna—and create the perfect natural retreat for you.

Established in 1935 to protect the Sandhills wildlife, the Valentine National Wildlife Refuge is located 20 miles south of the town of Valentine. Numerous lakes, marshes, and expansive prairies are home to a variety of wildlife, including more than 260 species of birds from herons to pelicans to songbirds. And when a blanket of snow covers the hills, bald and golden eagles take to the skies for the hunt. Regardless of the season, you'll want to visit the refuge in the early morning or just before sunset for the best bird-watching experience.

Look for other national wildlife refuges across the state, including North Platte and Crescent Lake NWRs in western Nebraska, Fort Niobrara NWR in the north-central section of the state, and Boyer Chute and DeSoto NWRs along the Missouri River in the east.



Wildlife refuges, pg. 64

Unique landscapes, pgs. 40, 62–63

Birding, pg. 77

R. Neibel



*Toadstool Geologic Park, Crawford*

## I SPY SOMETHING BREATHTAKING

During your travels in Nebraska, you'll notice a dramatic change in the topography. From the vast prairies in the east to the majestic bluffs and buttes in the west, and with lush grass-covered sand dunes in between, there will always be a captivating view from your windshield.

However, it's in the far northwestern corner of the state where the most surprising and rarest landscape in Nebraska can be found. At Toadstool Geologic Park north of Crawford, Mother Nature and Father Time have worked together to provide travelers with an unexpected lunarlike terrain that's ideal for hiking.

## THE HEAVENS ABOVE

One of Nebraska's more noticeable traits is a horizon that goes on and on, and this wide expanse of sky can lead to some pretty breathtaking scenery. Anyone who's been here to see storm clouds roll in would agree. The billowing dark clouds, complete with bright streaks of lightning, move almost gracefully across the prairie.

Then there are the sunsets—slipping away from buttery yellow to blazing orange to soft purple. The colors create a living work of art that brings a suitable close to each day.

And once night has set in, the dark sky becomes punctuated with brilliant stars. The lack of big-city light, particularly in the sparsely populated north-central region, allows for amazing stargazing.

*Storm Clouds Above Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford*





# BOUNTIFUL adventure





Agriculture is big business in Nebraska, but have you considered that it can be a big part of your next vacation as well? Ranch experiences that have you moving cattle and mending fence. Hayrack rides to find the perfect pumpkin. Even the opportunity to pick your own produce fresh from the fields. Talk about a destination where fun is always in season!

## U-PICK IT

The lush soil here grows a wide variety of produce including berries, asparagus, squash, melons, sweet corn, peaches, potatoes, cherries, and much more. So where can you find these fruits and vegetables at their freshest? Right in the fields, of course. The state is home to a number of farms that allow you to pick your own produce at the peak of perfection.

Near Morrill, WindHarvest Farms plants plenty of options to fulfill your five servings of fruits and veggies. You can head on out and help yourself to whatever's ripe: asparagus, squash, sweet corn, cantaloupe, rhubarb, strawberries, red raspberries, yellow raspberries, and blackberries.

Want that homegrown goodness without the trip to the farm? Farmers' markets across the state from May through October allow you to wander through the stands and purchase seasonal produce, meats, and baked goods.

For a list of u-pick locales and farmers' markets statewide, visit [ourbesttoyou.nebraska.gov](http://ourbesttoyou.nebraska.gov).



R. Naitzel

Bellevue Berry and Pumpkin Ranch, Papillion

## WELCOME TO RANCH COUNTRY

When you reach the rolling terrain of the Sandhills, you'll notice a few things. The pace is a bit slower, the cattle outnumber the people, and the pie is always homemade. This is quintessential Nebraska—where Midwestern hospitality is second nature and real-life cowboys still rope 'n' ride.

To truly experience the way of life prevalent in these parts, head to one of the many working guest ranches. In addition to cozy accommodations, several of the ranches offer the opportunity to drive cattle, mend fence, and help with daily chores.

If you're looking for a more relaxed experience, other activities can be arranged, including birding, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting. Or you can simply sit back and soak up your quiet surroundings.

## HARVESTING FUN

When summer draws to a close and the leaves begin to change, new kinds of fun start cropping up. And nothing says fall in Nebraska like a trip to one of the many pumpkin patches throughout the state.

Bellevue Berry and Pumpkin Ranch outside Papillion, home to more than 25 acres of pumpkins, is a prime example. The whole family will enjoy the Old West ghost town, hayrack rides through the spooky forest, and the new Pirates Cove. And for those looking for a little extra scare, the Ranch of Terror comes to life at dusk on weekends.

Another great stop is Hazel's Pumpkin Patch near Lodgepole. You can get lost in the corn maze, enjoy tasty treats from Hazel's Eatery, tour the grounds on a hayrack ride, and choose from 18 varieties of pumpkins and gourds.

## THE APPLE OF YOUR EYE

In the fall, orchards take center stage in the southeast corner of the state—particularly in Nebraska City. Both Arbor Day Farm and Kimmel Orchard are located here and offer all things apple. You can head out into the orchards to pick your own fruit, grab some yummy apple goodies at the on-site shops, and enjoy the atmosphere of the annual AppleJack Festival.



Ag-related events,  
pgs. 50–51, 65, 88



Ponderosa Ranch, Crawford

Courtesy of Ponderosa Ranch



# Wineries and breweries and distilleries, OH MY!

It's no surprise that a state with a knack for growing things is fast becoming known as a hot spot for wineries, breweries, and distilleries. Our one-of-a-kind libations are to be savored and remembered. So find what you're in the mood for and please your palate with flavorful wines, perfectly brewed beers, or smooth vodkas.

## A GRAPE ESCAPE

Release the bouquet of excitement as you leave the everyday behind and travel across the state to stop at wineries, vineyards, and tasting rooms. Now in its fourth year, the Nebraska Wine Tour passport program of the Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association includes more than 30 delightful stops that are sure to leave a lasting impression. For more information, visit [NebraskaWines.com](http://NebraskaWines.com).



Wineries, pg. 120





## IN GOOD SPIRITS

Premium spirits begin with premium grains. And the same grains that Nebraska's farmers grow in abundance are the ones used by the state's distilleries to manufacture some of the most delicious vodka around.

Cooper's Chase Distillery in West Point holds the distinction of being Nebraska's first federally licensed distillery. Its flagship product—Chase Vodka—has been in production for only a few short years but has quickly become a favorite among locals.

Another tasty spirit that will buddy up with your martini glass can be found at Solas Distillery in La Vista. In addition to creating the ever-popular, super-premium Joss Vodka, this distillery offers tours during select hours on Thursdays and Saturdays.

## VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF BEER

Some of our homemade brews are hops heavy, others have just the right amount of malted barley, but one thing is for certain . . . the secret ingredient that all Nebraska originals share is variety. With nearly a dozen breweries each producing its own signature liquid masterpieces, being the flavor of the week isn't necessarily a bad thing.

Among the most popular are the award-winning Pre-Prohibition Style Lager from Lucky Bucket Brewing Company, Burning Skye Scottish Ale from Empyrean Brewing Co., GIT-R-DONE American Golden Lager from SchillingBridge Microbrewery, and the always delicious Golden Fraü Honey Wheat from Thunderhead Brewing Company. So the next time the bartender asks for your order, take a step outside the mass-produced microbrew comfort zone and venture into Nebraska's sudsy flavor country.

*In addition to the wineries and breweries listed here, look for vineyards and tasting rooms in the regional sections of this travel guide. Cheers!*

# LIBATIONS

Tasting

Tours

Food

### WINERIES

<b>5 Trails Winery</b> Paxton	■	■	■
<b>17 Ranch Winery</b> Lewellen	■	■	
<b>Big Cottonwood Vineyards &amp; Winery</b> Tekamah	■	■	■
<b>Cedar Hills Vineyard</b> Ravenna*	■	■	■
<b>Cuthills Vineyards</b> Pierce	■	■	
<b>Deer Springs Winery</b> Lincoln	■		■
<b>Feather River Vineyard</b> North Platte	■	■	
<b>Glacial Till Vineyard</b> Palmyra*	■	■	■
<b>James Arthur Vineyards</b> Raymond	■		■
<b>Mac's Creek Vineyards &amp; Winery</b> Lexington	■	■	■
<b>Makovicka Winery</b> Brainard	■	■	■
<b>Mileta Vista Winery</b> St. Paul	■	■	■
<b>Nissen Wine</b> Hartington*	■	■	
<b>Prairie Creek Vineyards</b> Central City	■	■	■
<b>Prairie Vine Vineyard &amp; Winery</b> Mitchell	■	■	■
<b>Prime Country Winery</b> Denton*	■	■	■
<b>Sage Hill Vineyard &amp; Winery</b> Parks	■	■	■
<b>SchillingBridge Winery</b> Pawnee City	■	■	■
<b>Silver Hills Vineyards and Winery</b> Tekamah	■	■	■
<b>Soaring Wings Vineyard</b> Springfield*	■	■	■
<b>Superior Estates Winery</b> Superior*	■	■	■
<b>Three Brothers Vineyard and Winery</b> Farnam	■	■	
<b>Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard &amp; Winery</b> Brownville*	■	■	■
<b>WindCrest Winery</b> Raymond	■	■	
<b>WunderRosa Winery</b> Roca	■	■	■

### BREWERIES

<b>Dusters Restaurant and Gottberg Brew Pub</b> Columbus	■	■	■
<b>Empyrean Brewing Co.</b> Lincoln†	■	■	■
<b>Granite City Food &amp; Brewery</b> Lincoln/Omaha	■	■	■
<b>The Jaipur Restaurant and Brewing Company</b> Omaha	■		■
<b>Lucky Bucket Brewing Company</b> La Vista	■	■	
<b>Misty's Steakhouse &amp; Brewery</b> Lincoln	■		■
<b>Nebraska Brewing Company</b> Papillion*	■	■	■
<b>SchillingBridge Microbrewery</b> Pawnee City	■	■	■
<b>Thunderhead Brewing Company</b> Kearney	■	■	■
<b>Upstream Brewing Company</b> Omaha*	■	■	■

\*Tours by appointment only.

†Tours first Monday of the month or by appointment. Food, tastings, and gifts sold through Lazlo's and Fireworks.

# One TASTY trip

R. Nether

Some people plan vacations based on what they want to see or do; others plan around what they want to eat. If you fit into that second category, read on!



*Cedar Canyon Steakhouse, Valentine*

## BATTLE OF THE BEEF

Who's got the best steak in Nebraska? Well, that's a hot topic in these parts. This is cattle country, after all, and we take our red meat seriously. Everyone has a favorite to defend, so the debate continues.

In the urban areas, you have a number of options for prime cuts. Warren Buffett would suggest keeping it old-school in Omaha at Gorat's or Piccolo Pete's. In Lincoln, give Misty's a go—it's a capital city classic with two locations.

Some say, however, that the small-town steakhouses scattered throughout the Sandhills blow the competition out of the water. And you definitely can't beat the prices.

Three strong contenders are holding their ground in Valentine, each offering local beef cooked to perfection. With prime rib that literally melts in your mouth, Cedar Canyon Steakhouse is a mainstay on Main Street. The Peppermill & E.K. Valentine Lounge has been catering to carnivores for three generations—you can even buy their special seasoning. Rounding out the lineup is Jordan's, a sit-down establishment with a standout steak.

So now that the battle lines have been drawn, it's time for YOU to choose a side (and we're not talkin' baked potato or vegetable).

## BAKED TO PERFECTION

In Fremont, Alotta Brownies is causing alotta buzz. Having run a successful bakery in New York, owner Michelle Kaiser knows a thing or two about pleasing her customers. And the rows of fudgy brownies certainly do the trick. People travel from all around,

sweet tooth in tow, to try her tasty treats. If you make the trip, prepare yourself for a tough decision: espresso brownies, German chocolate brownies, lemon bars, orange chocolate truffle brownies (once voted best brownie in Manhattan's Upper Westside), crème de mint brownies, magic bars, zebra brownies . . . the list goes on and on. Dessert lovers will be in heaven.

*Alotta Brownies, Fremont*



E. Bowyer





Big Mama's Kitchen, Omaha

Courtesy of Omaha Chamber/Al Farnsworth



California Tacos and More, Omaha

Courtesy of Z. Paine

## TRIPLE D STAMP OF APPROVAL

As the host of Food Network's hit series *Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives*, Guy Fieri has made several trips to Omaha to feature some of the best "greasy spoon" fare in the country. Stop by these local joints and taste for yourself:

**Amato's Café** – Tasty Italian family recipes served up at breakfast and lunch with the homemade sausage taking center stage.

**Big Mama's Kitchen** – Soul food classics like oven-fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, and fried catfish guaranteed to fill you up.

**Brewburgers** – Made-from-scratch meals including all kinds of burgers and a Montreal smoked meat sandwich.

**California Tacos and More** – Made-to-order Mexican fare, including the signature Cali taco that has become an Omaha staple.

**Dixie Quick's** – An ever-changing menu of Southern comfort food with Cajun, Tex-Mex, and Southwest influences.

**Joe Tess Place** – An unusual neighborhood locale known for its fresh fish and best loved for its fried carp and catfish.

## IN SEARCH OF FABULOUS FLAVOR

Looking to satisfy a more sophisticated palate while traveling throughout the state? There are plenty of restaurants with impressive menus and faithful followings. Here's a list of just a few:

**The Black Crow, Beatrice** – A local bistro serving up big flavors and a lengthy list of nightly specials.

**Blue Orchid, Lincoln** – An excellent selection of curries, noodle dishes, and other Thai fare in an upscale downtown setting.

**Bonzai Beach Club & The Wave Pizza Company, Grand Island** – Brick oven pizza that's a break from the norm.

**Rosita's, Scottsbluff** – Authentic Mexican flavors and freshly made tortilla chips that might make you forget you're in Nebraska.

**Sandstone Grill, Burwell** – Flavorful dishes, a cozy atmosphere, and homemade pie that'll have you coming back for more.

For more dining options, flip through the regional sections in this guide and look for



## HAVE YOUR OWN FAVORITES?

To share your foodie finds in Nebraska, go to [facebook.com/VisitNebraska](https://www.facebook.com/VisitNebraska). You can add your own reviews and check out what others are raving about.



Sandstone Grill, Burwell

R. Nether



Rosita's, Scottsbluff

R. Nether



# *The FINER THINGS in life*

Nebraskans love to express themselves. And what better way to do so than through the visual and performing arts? From local museums and galleries to performing arts centers—and sometimes in the most unexpected places—you can find examples of Nebraskans' artistic endeavors just about everywhere you turn.

## ON EXHIBIT

Discover a veritable treasure trove of priceless masterpieces at Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum. Permanent collections include works by Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Jackson Pollock, Dale Chihuly, and George Segal. Even the building itself is a world-famous work of art. Add to that a never-ending parade of special exhibits, and you're sure to find enough creative inspiration to last a lifetime.

On the campus of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, you'll find the Sheldon Museum of Art, which houses one of the nation's most important collections of American art. Before you enter, you'll notice the impressive sculpture garden. And once you're inside, you will find more than 12,000 works to fill your appetite for art!

Beautiful art can also be found in small galleries throughout the state that showcase the works of local masters. Stop by Carnegie Arts Center in Alliance, Sheridan Gallery in Gordon, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts in Nebraska City, or Marxhausen Art Gallery in Seward, to name a few.



*Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln*





*Holland Performing Arts Center, Omaha*



*Post Playhouse at Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford*



*Neville Center for the Performing Arts, North Platte*

## GREAT PERFORMANCES

Indulge your desire for Broadway theatre, opera, dance, and symphony performances in Nebraska. With shows going year-round at venues across the state, anytime is a good time to be captivated by the sights and sounds of live performances.

In Omaha, the Holland Performing Arts Center is the city's newest large-scale concert hall. The distinctive building opened in 2005 and has helped transform downtown into a mecca for the region's art patrons.

The Orpheum Theater reminds us that classical style is always a winner when it comes to performing arts. Originally built in 1927, the Orpheum recently underwent a \$10 million renovation, restoring its ornate splendor and preserving its place as Nebraska's premier theatre destination.

Lincoln's Lied Center for Performing Arts, too, plays host to the finest performing artists. This state-of-the-art facility attracts a wide range of exceptional regional, national, and international talent.

If you're looking for a somewhat more casual venue, community theatres will certainly fit the bill. Great entertainment is always in store at the Brownville Village Theatre, Nebraska's oldest repertory theatre. Or plan an evening out at the Neville Center for the Performing Arts, which is home to the North Platte Community Playhouse.

## UNCOMMONLY GOOD

Who said art has to be confined to galleries and museums? In Nebraska, you never know where you might come across an amazing display of artistic expression.

Take, for instance, the Sidewalk Chalk Art Festival in Grand Island. Each May, chalk artists decorate the downtown sidewalks with colorful—if only temporary—visions. Or admire sand sculptures of all shapes and sizes at Omaha's Sand in the City and Kites & Castles at Lake McConaughy near Ogallala.

## Heating up the stage

Summertime is often considered the off-season for performing arts centers.

But have no fear—you can get your fill of entertainment at summer theatres at both ends of the state.

In the southeast, enjoy an old-fashioned melodrama at Eugene T. Mahoney State Park near Ashland. The cast and crew there produce three plays in the summer months and one during the fall. If you're in the northwest, head to the Post Playhouse at Fort Robinson State Park near Crawford for summer repertory theatre performances six nights a week.



*Sand in the City, Omaha*

# 16 reasons to celebrate

Eat. Laugh. Dance. Learn. Watch. Listen. Cluck like a chicken! No matter what type of activities you prefer, you'll find an ample supply of fun things to do at Nebraska's festivals and events.

For a complete list of what's happening and when, go to [VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov). In the meantime, here's a sampling (in no particular order) to get you started.

## Wilber Czech Festival, Wilber

Embark on a late-summer journey to the official Czech Capital of America and get a glimpse into the sights, sounds, and tastes (mmm . . . kolaches) of Czech culture.



## Great American Comedy Festival, Norfolk

You're guaranteed to get the giggles at this guffaw-filled gathering created as a tribute to native son Johnny Carson. Comedians come from across the country to participate.

## Intertribal Gathering at Fort Robinson State Park, Crawford

A colorful combination of music, storytelling, and movement! More than 100 dancers from several states show off their skills and share their heritage during the two-day celebration.



## Sandhill Crane Spring Migration, Platte River Valley

Witness one of the world's most amazing wildlife spectacles as nearly half a million sandhill cranes stop to rest and feed in central Nebraska. The migration occurs late February through early April.



## Summer Arts Festival, Omaha

The perfect place to discover fun and inspiration! The three-day get-together features works from 135 artists as well as a Children's Fair and TasteFest.

## Kool-Aid Days, Hastings

The official birthplace of Kool-Aid is the site of this annual event celebrating the popular powdered soft drink. Wet your whistle at the world's largest Kool-Aid stand.



## Nebraska Star Party, Valentine

A lack of big-city light in the state's north-central region offers amazing stargazing. Grab your telescope and check it out during this weeklong starry soirée.





## Wine, Writers, and Song, Brownville

One of the state's oldest communities is the setting for this special gathering celebrating wine, literature, music, and history. Activities include writing workshops and a river cruise.



## Jazz in June, Lincoln

There's nothing quite like spending a warm summer evening lounging on the lawn of the Sheldon Museum of Art and listening to jazz. Bring a chair or blanket and join us each Tuesday.



NEBRASKAland Magazine/NCR

## Nebraska's Official 4th of July Celebration, Seward

Experience good old-fashioned Americana complete with apple pie, a parade, and fireworks. Each year, more than 40,000 visitors join in the celebration.



R. Nethel

## NEBRASKAland Days, North Platte

Home to the Buffalo Bill Rodeo, this action-packed festival boasts more than 80 events over 12 days. It's the perfect place to kick back, get down, and cowboy up.



R. Nethel

## Junk Jaunt, Central Nebraska

Discover 300 miles of treasure during this three-day yard sale that draws thousands of shoppers from every state. Quaint towns and genuine hospitality are included.



Courtesy of the Nebraska State Fair

## Wayne Chicken Show, Wayne

Ranked among America's top ten wackiest summer events by TripAdvisor, the popular poultry party features the world's largest chicken dance, the National Cluck Off, and more chicken-inspired fun.



R. Nethel

## Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island

Tractor pulls and food on a stick. Livestock shows and grandstand entertainment. Find all this and more at one of the state's premier events.

## Greek Festival, Bridgeport

What began as a small gathering some 85 years ago has grown into a blockbuster event that draws fun-lovers from several states. Enjoy authentic Greek foods, dancing, and other activities.

## Cruise Nite Weekend, Kearney

Soup up your summer at one of the nation's largest vintage car shows. Music, food, and drag racing round out a long weekend of family-friendly entertainment.

## WANT MORE?

Check out the regional sections in the latter part of this guide for a peek into several other celebrations. For additional information, go to [VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov), where you can search events by date, location, and type.





# GOOD BUYS

Need a little retail therapy? You've come to the right place. We've got everything you need—and, yes, some things you don't—to soothe your desire to shop.

## IN STITCHES

If you or someone you know is into the fabric arts, there's plenty in store for you in Nebraska.

Quilting enthusiasts will want to make a side trip to Cottage Inspirations Quilts & Collectibles in Cambridge. Talk shop with three generations of quilters, or just browse the wide selection of fabric, supplies, and gift items.

Known for making some of the finest natural fiber yarn available, Brown Sheep Company is a must-stop for anyone with the knitting or crocheting bug. The shop, located outside Mitchell, is attached to the mill where this family-run business produces wool and silk-blend yarns sold worldwide.



*Cottage Inspirations Quilts & Collectibles, Cambridge*



## THE HUNT IS ON

In the Panhandle city of Sidney lies an outdoor enthusiast's paradise—the flagship store of Cabela's. Spread out across its 85,000-square-foot showroom is everything imaginable for your next outdoor adventure.

Not in the mood to buy? It's worth the stop just to see the museum-quality wildlife displays for which the store has become famous. And if your journey doesn't take you into the western section of the state, you can also visit locations in La Vista and Kearney.

## TREASURE TRAILS

What *can't* you find at a 300-mile continuous yard sale? Nebraska's Junk Jaunt, hosted by 35–40 towns along the Loup Rivers Scenic Byway and the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway in central Nebraska, takes place over three days each September and draws up to 20,000 people. Learn more at [JunkJaunt.com](http://JunkJaunt.com).



Cabela's, Sidney

Another option is to hit the Treasure Trek in western Nebraska for three days of yard sales and community events each June, or hop on the Lewis & Clark Scenic Byway to the east for its annual Lookin' for Art event in the spring. Visit [treasuretrekne.com](http://treasuretrekne.com) and [lewisandclarkscenicbyway.com](http://lewisandclarkscenicbyway.com) for more information.

## LOCAL CONNECTIONS

What better way to remember your Nebraska getaway than by taking a local treasure or two back home? With permanent storefronts in Grand Island and Kearney and a seasonal shop in Lincoln, GROW Nebraska is your one-stop source for locally made products such as specialty food items, crafts, and souvenirs.

Can't make it to one of GROW Nebraska's locations? There's no need to fret—you can always shop online at [growseb.com](http://growseb.com) for an equally fabulous selection of Nebraska goods.



Metro specialty shops, pg. 101



Junk Jaunt, Mason City

## Dynamic duo

When visiting Omaha, you're likely to hear talk of two celebrated stores: Nebraska Furniture Mart and Borsheims Fine Jewelry. Both retailers' long histories and solid reputations attracted one buyer in particular—the Oracle of Omaha, Warren Buffett, who added them to his Berkshire Hathaway holding company.

The 77-acre campus of Nebraska Furniture Mart gives new meaning to one-stop shopping. The largest home-furnishings store in North America offers virtually everything you need to fill your home with style and comfort.

Borsheims Fine Jewelry promises an absolutely bedazzling selection of jewelry, gifts, and home décor. And while the store counts Bill Gates among its clientele, you don't need a billionaire's budget to afford its designs.



Nebraska Furniture Mart, Omaha



# Livin' it up

With the setting sun comes a shift in the atmosphere. Adventure of a different kind now awaits—live music, happening hangouts, and the chance to get out there and paint the town!

## MARKETPLACES

Old warehouse districts are being given a new lease on life in cities across the country, and Nebraska is no different. Located in the downtown areas of Lincoln and Omaha respectively, the Historic Haymarket District and the Old Market combine great restaurants, popular bars, architectural charm, and ongoing activity to draw locals and visitors alike.

For a more casual bar that's always hoppin', hit the Old Market's Upstream Brewing Company. The Omaha-based brewery is located in a turn-of-the-century firehouse that's been historically renovated and offers multiple floors for patrons to enjoy a beer, play some pool, and grab a late-night bite.

If a retro-chic martini bar is more your speed, the Starlite Lounge in the Historic Haymarket District should be your first stop. Classic cocktails are served up amid vintage décor as tunes from the Rat Pack era transport you back to a groovier time.

No matter the vibe you're looking for, good times will be had by all along the brick-paved streets of the two popular markets.



Downtown districts, pg. 101

## FUNNY BUSINESS

Johnny Carson and Larry the Cable Guy both hail from Nebraska. So, of course, when you visit the home state of these famous funny men, it's only fitting to enjoy some comedic relief. Take, for instance, the Great American Comedy Festival. This annual affair spans nearly a week and is hosted by Carson's hometown of Norfolk. The amateur and professional competitions draw comedians from across the country trying to get the loudest laughs and take home top honors.

If you're not visiting during the festival, you can always head to Omaha's Funny Bone Comedy Club & Restaurant for your fill of side-splitting entertainment. The stage is graced by nationally renowned comedians as well as local talent, all promising standout stand-up.





Great American Comedy Festival, Norfolk



Live at the Bieroc, McCook

## KEEP IT ROCKIN'

Omaha's indie music scene is off the charts, and not surprisingly so since Saddle Creek Records (an independent music label) operates out of the NoDo area. To spotlight its own brand of no-rules rock, the record company opened Slowdown in 2007. The rock club and bar has been a must-stop locale for indie music fans ever since.

But Slowdown's not the only show in town. The Waiting Room and Sokol Auditorium also feed Omaha's hunger for indie music and entertainment.

When in Lincoln, you'll have no shortage of live tunes either. Red 9 serves up the sounds on indoor

and outdoor stages with lots of room to dance. For the blues aficionados, the legendary Zoo Bar delivers a steady stream of blues music and has been a favorite tour stop for thousands of local and national acts for more than 35 years. If country is more your thing, head to Uncle Ron's for big-name and up-and-coming artists . . . and maybe even a ride on the mechanical bull.

If you're into a more acoustic vibe, head west to Sehnert's Bakery and Bieroc Café. Singer/songwriters from across the nation make a stop in McCook to play in the Live at the Bieroc series. Just be sure to bring your appetite, as dinner is part of the experience.

## Get YOUR GREEN on

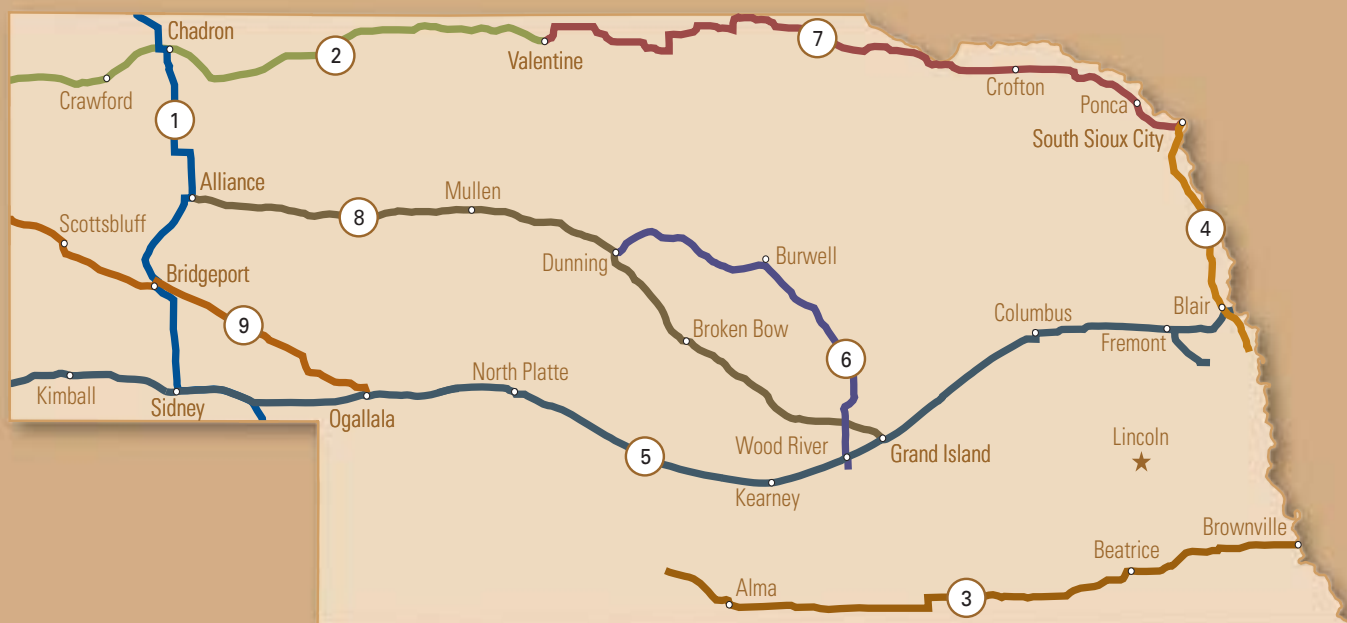
Many communities around the state have local celebrations that lead to some lively nightlife. And nowhere is this more true than in O'Neill. Regaled as the Irish capital of Nebraska and home to the world's largest shamrock, this town pulls out all the stops on St. Patrick's Day. Parades, fun runs, entertainment, and plenty of food and drink (some of it green) can be found every year.

Red 9, Lincoln



# Turn *on the* charm

Scenic beauty. History. Delightful stops. Quaint shops. Warm hospitality. Find it all along Nebraska's Byways as you travel through diverse terrain and small towns under a blanket of open sky. These nine scenic stretches of two-lane highway will have you waving goodbye to the hustle and bustle of everyday life.



- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 1. <b>385 – Gold Rush Byway</b> U.S. Hwy 385         | 5. <b>Lincoln Highway Scenic &amp; Historic Byway</b><br>U.S. Hwy 30 | 7. <b>Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway</b> NE Hwy 12                                     |
| 2. <b>Bridges to Buttes Byway</b> U.S. Hwy 20        | 6. <b>Loup Rivers Scenic Byway</b><br>NE Hwy 11 and NE Hwy 91        | 8. <b>Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway</b> NE Hwy 2                                 |
| 3. <b>Heritage Highway</b> U.S. Hwy 136              |  | 9. <b>Western Trails Scenic &amp; Historic Byway</b><br>U.S. Hwy 26 and NE Hwy 92 |
| 4. <b>Lewis &amp; Clark Scenic Byway</b> U.S. Hwy 75 |  |   |

For an interactive map of Nebraska's Byways, go to [VisitNebraska.gov/byways](http://VisitNebraska.gov/byways).





Chadron State Park, Chadron

R. Neibel

## [1] 385 – GOLD RUSH BYWAY

In the 1870s, as much as \$200,000 in gold was transported each day along this 158-mile route. Today, your experience will be golden even if your cargo isn't! A wealth of history can be found at museums and attractions that tell the tale of pioneer life and military heritage. The geologic playground features the rugged Pine Ridge and enough single-track to make you wonder whether Mother Nature didn't own a mountain bike. Quirky stops such as Carhenge add to the fun. [VisitNebraska.gov/goldrush](http://VisitNebraska.gov/goldrush)



## [2] BRIDGES TO BUTTES BYWAY

Nearly 200 miles of untamed open road stretch out before you, offering new adventures at every turn. This is Nebraska in its most pristine form, as the subtle and rolling sandhills transform into striking and majestic bluffs and buttes. Under the wide-open skies, you'll find a national grassland, horseback and Jeep tours of the Pine Ridge, and archaeological digs featuring mammoths and other fossils.

[VisitNebraska.gov/bridges](http://VisitNebraska.gov/bridges)



## [3] HERITAGE HIGHWAY

From the wooded bluffs along the Missouri River to the expansive playground of Harlan County Lake, this enchanting 238-mile byway cuts through lush fields of fertile farmland and down the main streets of historic communities. Hike, bike, and ride horses along tree-lined riverbanks; tour Homestead National Monument of America; visit the home of Willa Cather; or peruse the galleries and shops in historic Brownville.

[HeritageHighway136.com](http://HeritageHighway136.com)



Historic Tour, Superior

R. Neibel





R. Neibel

#### [4] LEWIS & CLARK SCENIC BYWAY

In 1804, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark embarked on a journey that would take them along what is now the eastern border of Nebraska. Follow in the footsteps of these two famous explorers through the bountiful cropland and beautifully wooded bluffs framing the Missouri River. Along the 82-mile route, discover two national wildlife refuges, a small tribal herd of bison, and the vibrant culture of the Winnebago and Omaha American Indian tribes.



#### [5] LINCOLN HIGHWAY SCENIC & HISTORIC BYWAY

Strike out along America's first transcontinental highway and witness history firsthand. This 400-mile byway will lead you to a Pony Express station, a sod house, wagon ruts from the Oregon Trail, and even the ranch of Buffalo Bill Cody. Head outdoors for a dip in Lake McConaughy—the state's largest recreational lake. Or step back in time at Front Street and Cowboy Museum and the Great Platte River Road Archway.

[LincolnHighwayNebraskaByway.com](http://LincolnHighwayNebraskaByway.com)



#### [6] LOUP RIVERS SCENIC BYWAY

Named after the North, Middle, and South Loup Rivers, this byway stretches 150 miles through scenic sandhills and fertile river valleys. Here you can catch the action of Nebraska's Big Rodeo and learn the history of Fort Hartsuff. Canoe or tank along the glistening rivers as they cut through the scenic terrain. Hunting and fishing is plentiful, and photographers, too, get their fill with rare wildlife sightings and the annual sandhill crane migration.

[LoupRiversScenicByway.com](http://LoupRiversScenicByway.com)



Erik Steinbakken/steinbakken.com



R. Neibel



## PODCAST TOURS

Experience the beauty, history, and fun of Nebraska's nine scenic byways. View podcasts on your computer or download them to your MP3 player and take them with you on the road. It all begins at

**VisitNebraska.gov/podcast.**

Also available on:



Smartphone users can also scan each byway's QR code to view videos right now. For more info, see page 2.

NEBRASKA and Magazine NGPC

### [7] OUTLAW TRAIL SCENIC BYWAY

Rumored to be the onetime hideout of outlaw Jesse James, this 231-mile byway is home to much more friendly inhabitants today. Meet these fine folks as you uncover the region's colorful past at a variety of museums and historic sites. Complete the journey relaxing near an unspoiled expanse of the Missouri River, enjoying nature at three state parks, or floating down the Niobrara River—one of the top ten canoeing rivers in the nation. [NebraskaOutlawTrail.org](http://NebraskaOutlawTrail.org)



### [8] SANDHILLS JOURNEY SCENIC BYWAY

Meandering through Nebraska's unexplored frontier, this byway winds 272 miles through remote countryside highlighted by dramatic landscapes including abundant grasslands, rolling sandhills, clear blue lakes, and the world's largest hand-planted forest. Explore the area's past at the Knight Museum and Sandhills Center and Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer. History, birding, guest ranches, and stargazing under a big Nebraska sky—this byway has it all. [SandhillsJourney.com](http://SandhillsJourney.com)



### [9] WESTERN TRAILS SCENIC & HISTORIC BYWAY

In the mid-1800s, this route was a main thoroughfare of the great western migration. Today, it's a breathtaking journey that attracts outdoor enthusiasts from every direction. Along the 144-mile byway, you can fish, sail, and ski on one of the largest reservoirs in the Midwest; stand in the shadows of Courthouse and Jail Rocks; view bald eagles; ride in a covered wagon around Chimney Rock; and work as a visiting ranch hand on one of the area cattle ranches.

[VisitNebraska.gov/westerntrails](http://VisitNebraska.gov/westerntrails)



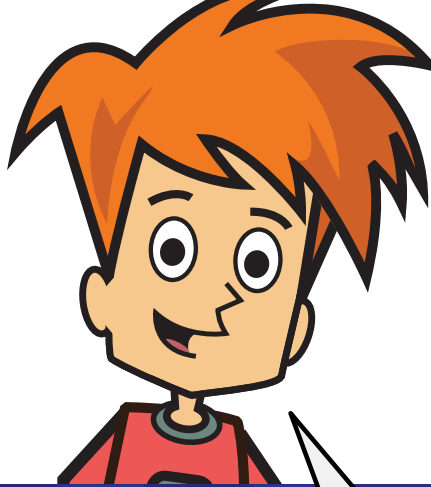
Windmills Along the Outlaw Trail Scenic Byway

[VisitNebraska.gov](http://VisitNebraska.gov)



Earth Lodge at Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer, Grand Island

R. Neibel



# KIDS ONLY

So you're heading out with the whole family on a Nebraska vacation. Bet you can't wait! There's so much for you to do: awesome water parks, children's museums that are totally fun, cool cowboy stuff, and lots of outdoor adventures. But you gotta make it through the car ride first. Here are a few games to help you pass the time.

**Hey there! I'm Tyler,**

and I'm just a regular kid (okay, fine, a cartoon kid) trying to get out there and see all the fun stuff in this state. Wanna check out my adventures along Nebraska's Byways? Go online to **VisitNebraska.gov/youth**. You never know . . . I may even show up at one of your destinations!

## Nebraska Facts Crossword Puzzle

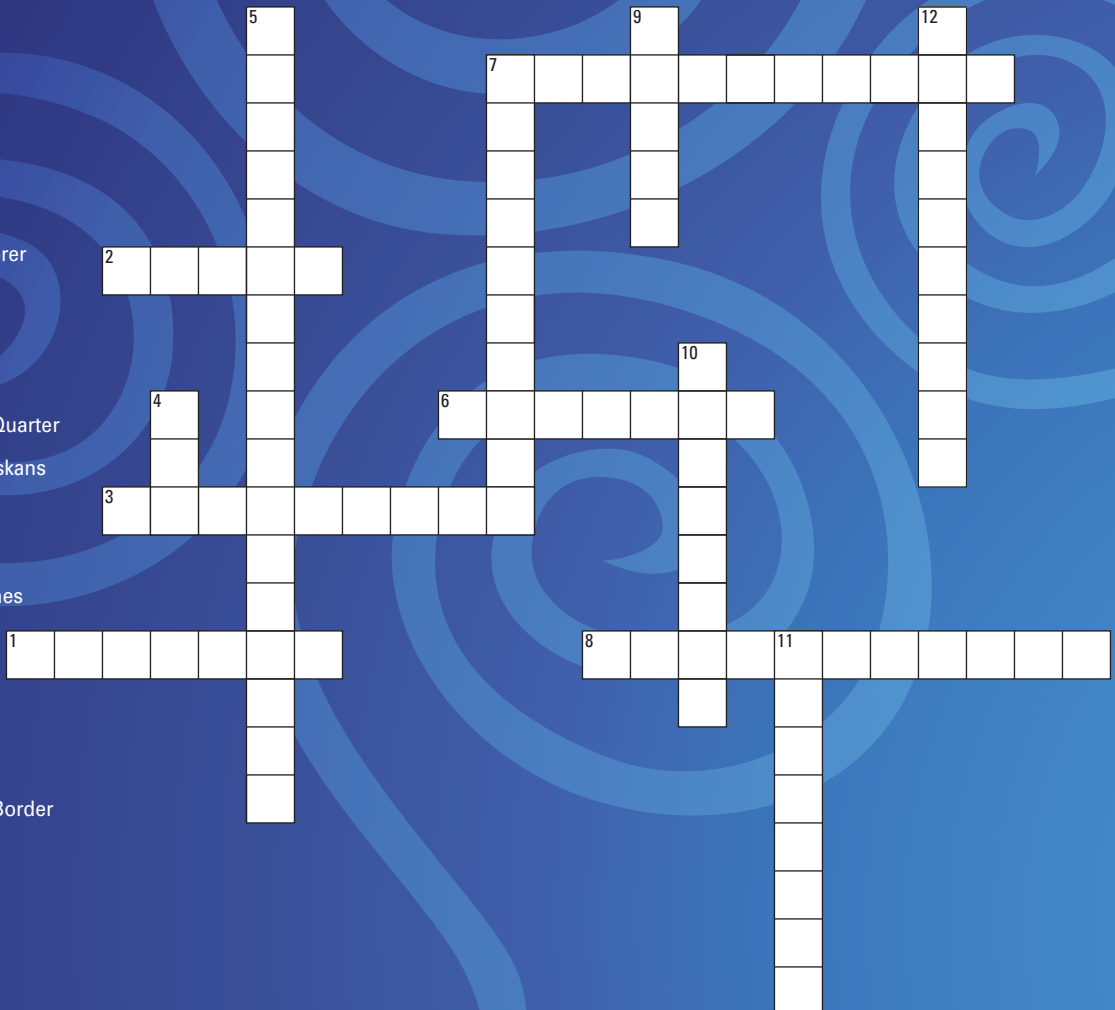
Learn more about Nebraska by using state facts to complete this crossword puzzle. Answers on page 174.

Across:

1. Capital City
2. Lewis's Fellow Explorer
3. State Flower
6. Soft Drink Created in Nebraska
7. Image on the State Quarter
8. Nickname for Nebraskans

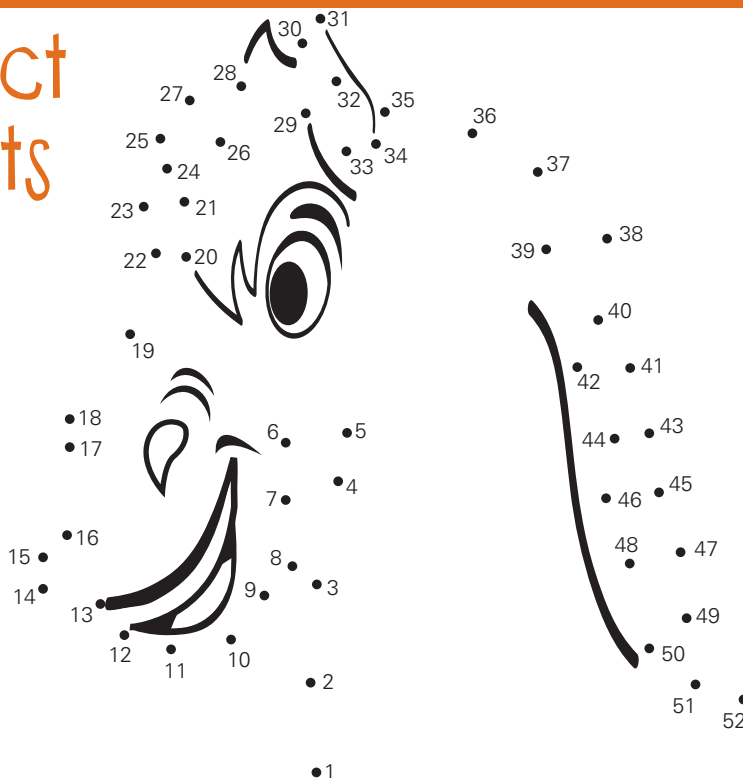
Down:

4. Number of Time Zones
5. State Bird
7. State Tree
9. Largest City
10. River That Forms Nebraska's Eastern Border
11. State Insect
12. Largest Lake





# Connect the Dots



## Picture Search

Can you find the six differences between these two pictures of a chicken dance at the Wayne Chicken Show?

Answers on page 174.

Wanna find out more about all the fun stuff in Nebraska?

Check out [VisitNebraska.gov/youth](http://VisitNebraska.gov/youth). You can watch videos, play games, and even keep a journal about your vacation. It's way fun!





*Center pivot irrigation systems—a Nebraska invention that has revolutionized agriculture around the world—can be experienced by land and by air. The monstrous sprinklers move in a circular motion to provide a variety of crops with much-needed moisture.*





# Nebraska Primer

Want to know who's who and what's what when it comes to Nebraska? Then check out the information below. Chances are there's something here you never knew before.

## FAMOUS FOLKS

- Financial phenom Warren Buffett calls Omaha home.
- Late-night funny man Johnny Carson grew up in Norfolk.
- Red Cloud and Standing Bear, American Indians who fought for the rights of their people, were Nebraska-born.
- TV and movie star Marg Helgenberger of *CSI* fame hails from Fremont.
- President Gerald Ford and civil rights advocate Malcolm X were both born in Omaha.
- William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody ran the famous Wild West Show from his ranch near North Platte.
- Comedian Larry the Cable Guy grew up on a farm near Pawnee City.
- Henry Fonda, born in Grand Island, took acting lessons from Marlon Brando's mother in Omaha.
- Ashland is the hometown of astronaut Clayton Anderson.
- The inventor of the strobe light was Dr. Harold Edgerton of Aurora.
- As a boy, Fred Astaire took his first dance class in Omaha.
- Two well-known authors, Willa Cather and Mari Sandoz, were inspired by their lives on the Nebraska prairie.

## NEBRASKA ORIGINALS

These are just some of the things that started right here:

- Kool-Aid
- Arbor Day
- Center pivot irrigation
- Cabela's
- Dorothy Lynch dressing
- Tin Roof Sundae
- Runza
- CliffsNotes
- Vice-Grips



J. Naab

Bailey Railroad Yard, North Platte

## BIG REPUTATION

- Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo operates the largest indoor desert, indoor swamp, and nocturnal exhibit in the world; the largest cat breeding facility in North America; and the largest indoor rainforest and Madagascar exhibit in the United States.
- Hebron is home to the world's largest porch swing, with seating for 18 adults.
- The Bessey Ranger District of the Nebraska National Forest includes the largest hand-planted forest in the world.
- Hastings sets up the world's largest Kool-Aid stand during its annual Kool-Aid Days.
- Bailey Railroad Yard is the world's largest railroad classification yard.

- Nebraska's Cherry County is larger than Connecticut.
- The Sandhills of Nebraska is the largest grass-stabilized dune region in the Western Hemisphere.

## FOR EXTRA CREDIT

- Nebraska is the only state in the union with a unicameral legislature.
- The word Nebraska comes from an Ojibwe word meaning *flat water*.
- Serving as the destination of cattle drives up the Texas Trail, Ogallala became known as the Cowboy Capital.
- Charles Lindbergh learned to fly in Lincoln before becoming the first person to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.
- Underneath much of the state lies the Ogallala Aquifer, a vast underground reservoir.
- In the 1870s, as much as \$200,000 in gold was sent along the Sidney-Deadwood Trail (U.S. Highway 385) daily to be loaded on the trains in Sidney.
- Before becoming the Cornhuskers, UNL's football team went by a variety of names including the Old Gold Knights, the Antelopes, the Rattlesnake Boys, and the Bugeaters.



Courtesy of Runza Restaurants